



Government of the District of Columbia

DC Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2008

I. Call to order

Reta Jo Lewis called to order the regular meeting of the DC Commission for Women at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, March 18, 2008 at 441 4th Street NW, Room 1112 South.

II. Attendees

The following persons were present: Reta Jo Lewis, Niambi Jarvis, Towan Isom, Jessica Solomon, Chrissie Juliano, Cherita Whiting, Robin Runge, Jennifer Grayson, Winona Scott, Donna Watts-Brighthaupt, Cynthia Harrison, Loryn Wilson, Salma Al-Dairi, Debbie Billet-Roumell, Michaela Tompkins-Davis, and Ali-Sha Alleman.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Minutes will be distributed to Commissioners via email for review and vote.

IV. New business

- 30-40th Anniversary Art Contest (Presented by Jessica Solomon)
 - Jessica outlined the details for the 40th Anniversary Logo Contest which she will forward to the Commission to help get the word out. The logos/artwork will be on display in the Wilson Building's lobby for viewing. The initiative is more of a showcase rather than a contest.

ACTION ITEM: 1) Needs Commission to assist in getting the information to the DCPS school principals. Jessica will follow-up with Debbie Billet for school principal contacts to get the word out.

- Anti-Poverty Advocates / Mayor Fenty & TANF FY 09. / Funding initiatives for DC Women (presented by Suzanne Henley)
 - Suzanne Henley discussed efforts for Commission to advocate an increase for Washington DC TANF benefits from \$427 to \$490 and consistently each year thereafter. Short-term goal is to reach \$526 the equivalent of Maryland's TANF, long-term goal is to reach \$1000.
 - Commission suggested initiative be approached as follows before making a commitment to move forward:
 - Here is what the TANF is today...

- This is what our efforts will change...

ACTION ITEM: 1) Robin Runge provided additional insights and the Commission suggested Stacey and Suzanne perform additional research before committing to picking this up as an initiative. In addition Stacey and Suzanne should work with the Commission's legislative chair and committee directly.

- Michaele Tompkins-Davis with DC Healthy Start gave a passionate plea for assistance with DCHS efforts to provide services for single mothers in the District. Michaele would like the Commission to pickup the mantle to ensure single mothers have more support services available.
- Michaele also solicited the Commission's assistance with securing computers for District homeless shelters. Making computers available at shelters will increase job opportunities and additional resources for shelter guests. The Commission suggested we expand our efforts by working with Cherita and the education committee.
- Niambi suggested Michaele provide a case study for existing shelters with computers and its benefits. In addition, Michaele should strategically position the shelter as an opportunity for the city to decrease the digital divide thereby complementing the District's agenda for free WiFi hot spots.
- Michaele needs immediate assistance with:
 - In-kind donations
 - Membership commitments
 - Computers for District shelters
 - Food and Beverage donations for the upcoming May 9th baby shower
 - Assistance with increasing the number of nurse case managers
 - Outreach

ACTION ITEM: 1) Schedule follow-up meeting with Niambi and Towan. 2) Towan will forward contact for Whole Foods. 3) Michaele will email a breakdown of exactly what she needs and how the Commission can be of greater service. 4) Jessica will work with Michaele to secure in-kind donations. 5) Michaele will provide a case study for shelters with computers and its benefits.

- Cherita Whiting reported that due to her lobbying efforts select recreation centers will open later to provide more recreational activities for the city's children on the weekend. Cherita's will host an education forum to ensure District parents have a grasp of the school budget. In addition, Cherita will host a domestic violence program next month in conjunction with Chief Lanier's office.

ACTION ITEM: Towan will assist Cherita with marketing the upcoming domestic violence program which the Commission will endorse.

OTHER ITEMS:

- The Commission needs a chair for the International Committee
- Jessica requested Commissioners to participate in YWLC networking event to create synergy between the committee and the YWLC
- Committee would like to rotate the Commission meetings to the Wards. The Chair will confirm when and where based on the Mayor's and other Commission objectives and collaboration with District agencies.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- American University Women's Initiative (March 20th)
<http://www.ausg.org/news/2008/03/17/networking-party-thursday-march-20>
- 2008 Mary Mcleod Bethune Council House National Historic Site
<http://dc.about.com/od/historichomes/a/Bethune.htm>
- National Council of Negro Women, Inc. (March 28th)
<http://www.ncnw.org/events/index.htm>
- Women Who Tech TeleSummit (March 31st) Visit
<http://www.womenwhotech.com/register.html>
- CAAB (Linda Stroman) <http://www.caab.org/>
- National Museum of the American Indian (Month of March)
<http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?second=dc&subpage=events&third=films>
- Domestic Violence Program
- Education Town Hall Meeting (April 6th)
- National Museum for Women in the Arts
<http://www.nmwa.org/calendar/index.asp?Date=3/26/2008&Month=3&Year=2008&Activity=>
- Triple Threat <http://mwpha.org/joomla/2008-MWPHA-Annual-Meeting-Flyer.pdf>

V. Adjournment

Reta Jo Lewis adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Towan Isom; Minutes approved by: DC Commission for Women